

Ontario Seeks \$50 Billion In Tobacco-Related Health Care Costs

McGuinty Government Suing Tobacco Manufacturers

NEWS

September 29, 2009

Ontario filed a \$50 billion lawsuit today against a group of tobacco companies seeking damages for past and ongoing health care costs linked to tobacco-related illness.

The [Tobacco Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act, 2009](#), passed unanimously by the Legislature earlier this year, clarified the rights of the parties involved, and also set the framework for a lawsuit like this.

The legislation:

- Allows Ontario to directly sue tobacco companies for alleged wrongdoing
- Allows for the recovery of past, present and ongoing tobacco-related damages
- Creates a method to determine health care cost damages incurred by taxpayers arising from tobacco-related illnesses
- Establishes the burden of proof required to link exposure to tobacco products to tobacco-related disease
- Allocates liability among tobacco companies by market share.

While the legislation clarifies the process, the government still has to prove its allegations in a court of law.

The province's claim was issued today. Under Ontario law, companies must now file their intent to defend:

- Within 20 days after service if incorporated in this province
- Within 40 days after service if incorporated elsewhere in Canada and in the United States
- Within 60 days after service if incorporated in the United Kingdom or elsewhere.

QUOTE

“Ontario is taking the next step towards recovering taxpayer dollars spent fighting tobacco-related illnesses. We are joining British Columbia and New Brunswick in initiating a lawsuit to recover health care costs from tobacco companies.”

– Chris Bentley, Attorney General

QUICK FACTS

- Ontario is seeking \$50 billion in damages. This represents the health care costs borne by Ontario taxpayers since 1955.
- Tobacco-related health care costs currently total more than \$1.6 billion per year in Ontario.
- Smoking is the number one cause of premature death and illness in Ontario, accounting for the deaths of about 13,000 Ontarians each year. That's 36 deaths a day.

LEARN MORE

Read the [Tobacco Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act](#)

Learn about the [Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy](#)

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